
Subject: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Mon, 05 Dec 2005 02:15:58 GMT

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Hello! Two weeks ago or so I posted here about fixing my old 1985 Dual CS-505-2 turntable. To those who forgot, my turntable produced an awful hum. Well, I decided to buy a brand new one. (I am still going to fix my old one, but I want a new one as well.) I am not a DJ and thus I do not need DJ features, although I do need a great hundred percent analog sound. I really do not want to select it by brand and instead, I want to select it by quality. One of the most important qualities to consider is of course the signal-to-noise ratio. Another one is wow and flutter. I have looked at various turntables in local stores here in Toronto, as well as on manufacturer's websites (whatever I was able to find). The turntables offer a >60 to >50 dB signal-to-noise ratios (the higher, the better) and

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Mon, 05 Dec 2005 09:29:20 GMT

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Technics SL 1200. Great specs/ very good sound/ built like a tank. 350\$ discounted new.

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Mon, 05 Dec 2005 20:40:56 GMT

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That one is actually very expensive mostly because it has features I do not need. It is in fact a DJ turntable. One that caught my eye was a Sony PS-LX350H:
http://www.sonystyle.com/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/eCS/Store/en/-/USD/SY_DisplayProductInformation-Start?ProductSKU=PSLX350H. It costs only about \$200 in the US, which is about \$230 in Canada. If I order it without a cartridge, it would be even cheaper. Although it does not have speed 78, it has everything else that I need. It is belt-driven, which makes it more price-efficient (or cost-efficient). Some people discouraged me to buy a belt-driven turntable, while others persuaded. I really have no idea which is better.

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [John Chleapas](#) on Mon, 05 Dec 2005 22:52:48 GMT

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What phono stage preamplifier are you using? What cartridge will you be using? To really get into

vinyl it is not that "cheap." If you go very low end you may be less than thrilled with your experience. In my post below I give a link to a site where the guy restores classic Thorens turntables. I have no connection to him but he has a small loyal following. Of course his tables are from 450 to 500. I think you may be much happier to simply find a used Thorens near you for sale. Should be less than 200 for a TD-160. These were excellent tables and you can search for lots of good DIY mods. His restored Thorens has a Rega 300 arm that is worth almost his asking price alone. Do lots of reading to see if this is really for you. I would buy a used belt drive over most dd tables. The exception are the Denon tables. I got my Dad a new DP-47F a few years ago. With the Denon 103d cartridge it is very good sounding. Not up to my Well Tempered Classic, or my Ariston tables but nice nonetheless. Used tables will give you more bang for the buck over cheap new production turntables. Take your time and find one that is known to be working near you to avoid the heartache of shipping damages. Too many people are clueless on how to pack and ship a table. Good luck! john

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 06 Dec 2005 04:31:35 GMT

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Thanks!! I will most likely be using an Ortofon OM 30 cartridge. They seem to be the best, according to reviews. Presently, I have a cheap preamp, RCA AH500, that I bought for use with my old turntable. After I select a new turntable, I will be selecting a new preamp for it. I have read a lot of criticism towards Technics SL 1200 turntables, and Technics turntables in general. Nonetheless, I do believe that they are great. I do not believe that their price is in any way proportional to their quality of sound. QUALITY OF SOUND, AS I KNOW, DEPENDS MOSTLY ON THE CARTRIDGE AND THE STYLUS, as well as on the record. I know about Thorens as well. Many positive things have been said about it. I am not trying to save on sound quality. I want to save on features that I will never be using. DJ turntables offer a lot of them and are therefore expensive, while the sound quality (if it even depends on the turntable itself) could be the same as on a cheaper non-DJ model. I went to a Sony store today. They did not have the model I talked about, only a cheap one. Seems to me that this model is not available here in Canada. I keep looking and reading reviews...

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 06 Dec 2005 12:48:01 GMT

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Well; it appears you are serious. So let me say that there is a way to approach the vinyl playback scheme that makes sense. First up; what do you need to make good sound come out of a turntable. One; absolute speed stability. That influences pitch and detail retrieval. One of the reasons we encourage the Technics tables because they are very pitch stable. Why is that? Because the huge company behind them can offer very tightly specced motors and drive systems due to economies of scale. Next you must find a way to drain excess energy from the suspension.

Two ways to do that; large mass or carefull attention to materials. Both are costly to implement. A superlight weight table will not perform well period. If you go into the store and pick up that table; it should be real heavy. Next you need a suspension that puts the resonance of the table below audibility. You can use mass or springs. The technics use mass but most belt-drive suspended tables use springs. Either implementation works well if well designed. The arm must hold the cartridge as fixed and rigid in perfect alignment with the groove. It must have very little resistance to motion in the lateral and horizontal plane; yet be very rigidly mounted and aligned. That requires expensive bearings of high quality. The arm must also be inert to resonances which requires expensive materials and closs tolerance engineering. The Technics arm is not the best arm; but it has very good bearings and is well mounted to the table. There are many other well designed arms; and they start at around 300\$ for something like a Rega RB 300. Next; the arm must be compatible with your cartridge. In other words the cartridge has a compliance wich measures the springyness of the stylus. If you use a arm that does not work well with that cartridge you risk bringing the tonearm-cartridge resonances up into the audible band. Thats bad. The Technics has a medium mass arm that works well with many of the modern low compliance cartridges. Thats why we recommend it; because it does all the good things for very little money comparitively. The Sony you mention will have poor bearings; both main and arm. The arm will have resonances that are audible and may not be compatible with your cartridge. Why do I say that? Because it cannot be done; to build a table with adequate engineering for under 350\$ including arm. Remmember; the Technics has a very high quality motor unit that includes a very accurate pitch control adjustment. The arm is designed to work with that table and the plinth is massive and well damped. Those attributes are hard to find in a cheap table. Do tables exist for less money that are decent? Sure, there are a couple 300 tables around that are good but then you must purchase an arm; or if they come with the arm, it is marginal at best. There is a lot more info that can be expressed about turntables. We could write a book here. So I just offered an explanation of why I picked that table as a recommendation in order to keep the post short and simple. Feel free to ask anything about tables you want and good luck.

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 06 Dec 2005 22:58:39 GMT

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Thanks, manualblock! Good to hear from an expert. Of course, the Technics we are talking is THE best turntable the world knows, no doubt about it. Sony, perhaps, is the second or third best. I have been thinking about a lot of turntables, but only Technics and Sony have been taken seriously. The key difference between the two is the drive type. Technics is direct-drive and Sony (like my old Dual, that we talked about earlier) is belt-drive. One advantage of a direct-drive turntable is that motor speed is electronically and therefore more effectively maintained. Although belt-drive is more price-efficient, I am almost ready to pay a lot for good sound. Your explanation has made me be more interested in the Technics model. A lot of electronics and record stores sell them, both new and used. A lot of used ones are in great condition (I am talking about those that were not used by DJs), but could cost 30-40% less than new. That would be a great deal. Let me see...

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 07 Dec 2005 02:17:06 GMT
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well Anonymous; things are not so simple as usual. Direct Drive has it's problems and like everything in this world is a trade off. The best way to spin a record is really an idler wheel drive system which we won't get into except to say the best are done that way. Belt-drive is second best except it must be done to a much higher standard in order to maintain accuracy. While it has the advantage of decoupling the motor from the platter it requires a very massive platter in order to maintain rotational stability. That costs money. So the trade off is a well constructed Direct drive will produce better specs than a marginal belt-drive. Remember we are speaking of tables up in the post 1000\$ range for belt drives of good execution. There we have the sub 400\$ Technics that fills the niche between cheap belts and good belts that run into heavy money. Your other option if you plan to become involved in vinyl to a great extent is possibly following an upgrade path on something like a VPI. The VPI junior used goes for about 400\$ and with some luck you can find one with a PT 6 arm. Every part of the table can be upgraded in the future to something better starting with the main bearing and platter to the suspension and plinth. It handles all types of arm and even offers a stand-alone motor system which is a great improvement. At any rate good luck because CD is if you listen to music; while vinyl is if you love music.

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Wed, 07 Dec 2005 21:21:44 GMT
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Well, it seems that Technics SL 1200 is the best choice, but is there any difference between MK2/MK2PK, M5G and 1200MK5/1210MK5 versions, in terms of sound quality? I was able to find those online; the specs are nearly the same, but that does not speak of quality. Also, do you know what kind of cartridge is standard on Technics SL 1200 and what is its value? "CD is if you listen to music; while vinyl is if you love music." – absolutely true! Thanks!

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 08 Dec 2005 13:05:08 GMT
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The Mk 2 has the best reputation but in my opinion as long as they all have the same arm then they are pretty equal. I have not studied all the models but that info should be available. Cartridges; well if you have the ortofon which is a good cartridge then that should be fine. Remember as long as the cartridge is compatible with the arm then it is a matter of taste in terms of sound quality. Above you ask about moving coils and I admit I am partial to them. They have a frequency response that reaches up into the 30k range so some who own SS equipment don't like the rising high end. Also you must have a step-up device to properly drive the phono

stage and that adds to the cost. The MC carts track at higher level; usually around 2.5 grams. There are high output MC's like the Ortofon MC 5 that I like and they are reasonably priced and track at a lower force. Regarding high tracking force; Many think that means greater record wear but studies done in the 80's disproved that notion. In the interest of brevity let me say this; for the Technics and your needs there are many very good carts out there of the Moving Magnet type. If you have a 100\$ to spend then the Shure M97 ED is a very good choice; nice and rounded with good tracking and smooth presentation. Other than that I prefer to stay away from Grado's for this table. I would suggest the Ortofon is a good choice. Their 540 model is an old favorite. If you have more money; then the Audionote Iq series is the best MM out there that I can see. They sound like moving coils without the hassle of step-up devices. If you want to go extreme with it; then the Denon DL 103/Audio Technica 150/ Denon 601 these are great sounding carts that will run you around 250\$ and properly set-up in the Technics will equal almost anything within reason. I use an old Empire MC Gold at the moment. When that is done I have a Fidelity Research waiting in the wings. Hope this helps; cartridge recommendations are simple really; providing you have a well engineered deck then most of the good brands that are medium compliant and reasonable output will sound fine. While they may be different from each other; they will still play nice music. Since it is hard to audition these things it is my experience that the best course is to go with what you know; that being the Ortofon and since you like that cart, maybe just stick with their line since it is very musical and good sounding. They offer a range in price from 90\$ up to 2500\$ for a cart. so that means plenty of choices. If you decide on a MC; the Denon's are available for 250\$, as is the excellent and rare Audio Technica 150ml which BTW is a MM cart.

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Sun, 11 Dec 2005 22:52:41 GMT
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Thanks a lot! Happy holidays!

Subject: Re: Buying a turntable
Posted by [Jody Thornton](#) on Sat, 31 Dec 2005 05:49:36 GMT
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I would have to STRONGLY disagree with the advice you've been given of the Technics MK/x series as an audiophile choice. They are as much as \$700.00 /cdn and it is a good table. Don't get me wrong. But what you are paying for is a high-torque, quick startup motor (ideal for slip and back queing), sturdiness, and handling. It needs to be able to withstand some nasty environments. But most of the cartridges it is meant to work with are meant to track heavier, and use conical styli, which don't track high frequencies as well. You want either elliptical, or if you're rich - van den hul, nde elliptical, or the like. What you are looking for is a simple, easy to use platter that allows your vinyl to come to life, and your absolute best pressings to rival digital. You'll be left in the cold with the Technics. If you're looking new, I would check out Pro-Ject's line. I'm not

allowed to say who local dealers are, but there are some near Hamilton, Ontario - where I'm from. Even one model comes with a pretty decent Ortofon cartridge (about \$350.00). And there are speed box options, so that if you have 45s, you don't have to manipulate the external belt. Cheers, Jody Thornton
